

GIST EDUCATION AND LEARNING RESEARCH JOURNAL. ISSN 1692-5777.  
No. 10, (JANUARY - JUNE) 2015. pp. 128-148.

# The Implications of Orthographic Intraference for the Teaching and Description of ESL: The Educated Nigerian English Examples<sup>1</sup>

Implicaciones de la Intraferencia Ortográfica para la Enseñanza y Descripción del Inglés como Segunda Lengua: Ejemplos Inglés Nigeriano Formal

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## Abstract

This paper examines orthographic intraference and its implications for teaching and describing English as a second language (ESL). Orthographic intraference is used here to denote instances of single word spelling, acronyms, mix up of homophones, homonyms and compound word spelling arising not from interference but from orthographic rules and features of the English language. The paper is based on the concept of intraference and examples were gathered from Nigerian English, the educated variety, from 2005 to 2013 with questionnaires and recording of spontaneous speeches and from secondary sources. The study established that orthographic intraference cases are widespread and common in Educated Nigerian English. Consequently, the paper proposes that teachers of ESL identify, teach and drill learners on them to make learners internalize the generally accepted standard forms.

**Keywords:** Orthographic intraference, derived spelling, acronymisation, compound words, signs.

<sup>1</sup> Received: Dec. 15, 2014 / Accepted: April 16, 2015

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## Resumen

Este artículo examina la intraferencia ortográfica y sus implicaciones para la enseñanza y descripción del inglés como segunda lengua. En este caso, la intraferencia ortográfica es utilizada para denotar ejemplos ortográficos de palabras simples, siglas, combinación de palabras homófonas y homónimas y ortografía de palabras compuestas derivadas no sólo de la intraferencia sino también de las reglas ortográficas y las características del idioma inglés. Este artículo se basa en el concepto de intraferencia y los ejemplos fueron recopilados del idioma inglés nigeriano formal desde el año 2005 hasta el año 2013 mediante la aplicación de cuestionarios y la grabación de entrevistas espontáneas y consulta de fuentes secundarias. El estudio estableció que los casos de intraferencia ortográfica son generalizados y comunes en el inglés nigeriano formal. Por consiguiente, el artículo propone que los profesores de inglés como segunda lengua identifican, enseñan y entrenan a los estudiantes sobre la manera en la que pueden interiorizar las formas estándar generalmente aceptadas.

*Palabras clave:* Intraferencia ortográfica, derivada ortográfica, acrónimo, palabras compuestas, signos

## Resumo

Este artigo examina a interferência ortográfica e suas implicações para o ensino e descrição do inglês como segunda língua. Neste caso, a interferência ortográfica é utilizada para denotar exemplos ortográficos de palavras simples, siglas, combinação de palavras homófonas e homônimas e ortografia de palavras compostas derivadas não só da interferência senão também das regras ortográficas e as características do idioma inglês. Este artigo se baseia no conceito de interferência e os exemplos foram recopilados do idioma inglês nigeriano formal desde o ano 2005 até o ano 2013 mediante a aplicação de questionários e a gravação de entrevistas espontâneas e consulta de fontes secundárias. O estudo estabeleceu que os casos de interferência ortográfica são generalizados e comuns em inglês nigeriano formal. Em decorrência, o artigo propõe que os professores de inglês como segunda língua identificam, ensinam e treinam os estudantes sobre a maneira na que podem interiorizar as formas padrão geralmente aceitas.

*Palavras chave:* Interferência ortográfica, derivada ortográfica, acrónimo, palavras compostas, signos

### Introduction

Orthography is a major dimension of graphology. Crystal (2005) says that graphology is “the writing system in standard, everyday use, which consequently attracts most study” (p. 194). The smallest meaningful unit of graphology is the grapheme, which is analogous to the morpheme in Morphology and the phoneme in Phonology. Graphemes are individual letters or combinations of the letters of the English alphabet in writing. A letter such as <t> is a grapheme or monograph and a combination of letters like <ch> or <ph> is a digraph. Orthography is at times used in the place of graphology and vice versa. While graphology is all-embracing of the writing systems, visual images, graphics and calligraphy, orthography is limited to writing symbols and their uses.

Central to orthography are the following features: (1) the use of small and capital letters both small and capital letters, (2) spelling system and rules, (3) ‘a particular system of punctuation’ and punctuation marks, (4) ‘the use of Arabic numerals (1,2, 3...),’ (5) ‘the specialised use of certain’ signs or symbols like # and & (Trask, 1999, p.219). A sign is a mark, sketch, object or image on a paper, or somewhere, which stands for what it shows or represents something else. Three types of signs are used in English to communicate. These are icons, index and symbols. An icon is a mark that is similar or identical to the idea or thing it represents; for example a sketch, picture, or an effigy of somebody. An index is a sign that shows a causal (cause-and-effect) link between the sign and what it represents or what follows, so that whenever we see an indexical sign, we immediately are reminded of the cause or result, e.g. smoke is the index of fire.

Symbols, unlike icons and indexes, are conventional and socio-cultural signs, which one is taught to interpret. There may be no connection between the symbol and its meaning in actual nature, unlike icons and indexes. Symbols and their meanings are handed down from generation to generation. Thus they differ from place to place and culture to culture. Language is a clear example of symbolic representations, particularly in the written medium. Bloomfield (1934) says that “a symbol ‘represents’ a linguistic form in the sense that people write the symbol in situations where they utter the linguistic form, and respond to the symbol as they respond to the hearing of the linguistic form” (285). This paper concentrates on the use of symbols, not icons and indexes, in writing. It examines how symbolic signs, orthographic rules and features are redeployed from one area of the language to another based on the influence of intraference (See theoretical background). Examples are drawn from Nigerian English (NigE).

### Literature Review

The paper is based on the concept of intraference. According to Ekundayo (2014), the term and concept of intraference arises from a lexicalisation of the concepts of interlingual interference (Richards & Sampson, 1984), the overgeneralisation of linguistic features (Selinker, 1984), and Labovian (1994) internal principles of linguistic change. The application of the word intraference may be traced to several independent outstanding works separated by time and long distances: Barry Hale, an Australian video artist, uses the term ‘intraference mirror’ since 2000 to denote a simple video feedback loop which he manipulates to create evolving images in real time ([www.barryhale.intraferencemirrors](http://www.barryhale.intraferencemirrors)); William Croft (2000, 2003) uses the term in the same sense that Ekundayo (2006, 2014) subsequently conceptualises it. Croft (2000, 2003) says grammaticalisation, interference and intraference occasion language change. He says that “different elements of the same language can interfere with each other if they share enough linguistic substance”, and that intraference occurs when language items are affected by different dialects, sociolinguistic variants or other structures of the same language (Croft, 2000, pp. 111-165).

Ekundayo (2006), conceptualises intraference as the habit of transferring the rules and dynamics of a language from a section where they have been established and where they acceptably operate to another section within the language where they hitherto used not to operate. “Since such a transfer is within the language, it is better tagged intraference, which is the reverse of interference” (p.20). In Ekundayo (2013), intraference is conceptualised as follows:

Intraference is concerned primarily with (nonnative) language speakers who do not understand their (second) language perfectly and are affected by such psycho-sociolinguistically relevant conditions as memory limitations, distractions, shifts of attention, interest and socio-cultural context. They are further affected by such linguistic dynamics as the phonological, morphological, syntactic, semantic and orthographic rules and items that characterise their (second) language, as they apply their knowledge in actual performance. (17)

In this conceptualisation rendered in a phraseology reminiscent of Chomsky’s (1965) eminent linguistic theory, Ekundayo mentions two major factors that affect the competence and performance of (second) language users: ‘the psycho-sociolinguistic’ and ‘the linguistic’. Ekundayo says that the psycho-sociolinguistic is an amalgam of two sub-factors. The first is the social knowledge, context and setting of the speakers; for when a new concept, idea, experience, event, etc

confronts nonnative speakers, and even native speakers of a language, they fall back on the dynamics, loopholes and rules of the language and (re)deploy them to convey the new experience and idea. This effort may generate a new linguistic structure, or an existing term may be expanded to accommodate an additional meaning for the new experience. Naturally placed in a multilingual ESL setting far away from a native English-speaking community, and vulnerable to distraction, ignorance, loss of attention and memory, educated Nigerians redeploy the features of English to create new structures or similar structures to some of the existing ones in the language.

The second sub-factor of the psycho-sociolinguistic is the brain or mind mechanism of the users, the way the users view and rearrange features of the language, creatively or otherwise, in their minds. Precisely, it relates to Chomsky's (1965) "competence" and "performance." Competence is the underlying innate linguistic knowledge of a speaker. Performance denotes the practical, actual use of language in a given situation. As native speakers possess competences, so do educated nonnative speakers possess some competences, which are not on a par with those of native speakers. However, both native and nonnative speakers must necessarily put their competences to use. Different competences generate different instances of use and performances. Intraference features emanate from the reassignment and redeployment of a language items and rules that nonnative speakers/writers have in their competences to hitherto new areas and contexts.

The linguistic factor generates the five major types of intraference: phonological, graphological or orthographic, morphemic or morphological, morpho-syntactic and lexico-semantic with many sub-divisions in Ekundayo (2006, 2013). The orthographic type is subdivided into 'intraference of writing symbols in SMS and informal email' and 'orthographic intraference.' In orthographic intraference, the rules and features of writing are redeployed from areas where they are well-established and acceptably used to new areas in the language where they are not well-established and then questionably used. For example, a spelling error so-called, or a variant, may have been influenced by the spelling of its root or base, e.g. 'sustain' and 'maintain' influence the spelling of 'maintainance' and 'sustainance.' A similar spelling, or the rule for spelling similar structures, may influence another. For instance, the spelling of 'complete,' 'replete,' 'deplete,' etc influence the analogical spelling of 'interpret' instead of 'interpret.' Homophones and homonyms (words which sound alike or are identical, e.g. *where/were*, *sight/cite/site*, *collaborate*, *corroborate*, etc) at times 'intrafere' with one another, that is they are sometimes unintentionally used to

substitute one another within the same language. Educated people with high linguistic competence do fall into the intraference of homophones and base forms, a linguistic habit which has nothing to do with their mother tongues, incompetence or downright ignorance. After all, they can and do correct them when such slips are pointed out to them.

Acronyms and regular words are another features that intrafere with each other. An acronym is a combination of the first letters of the words in a concept, organization or name, which can be pronounced as a word, but they are not like regular, established words; for example, UFO, where U stands for *Unidentified*, F for *Flying* and O for *Object*. Acronyms are usually written in capital letters: UN, ECOWAS, IMF, etc, while regular established words are written in small letters, e.g. *anger*, *opinion*, or written with initial capital if they are proper nouns, e.g. *Jackson*, *Steve*, or in full capital letters when they are stressed or used as headings/titles, e.g. ASPECTS OF THE THEORY OF SYNTAX. In writing acronyms, educated Nigerians tend to downgrade them to regular words by writing them in small letters or a mixture of upper and lower cases. This tendency is a transfer from the regular way in which established words are written (See 3.3).

Another orthographic intraference emanates from the spelling of compound formations. Often, writers are confused about how a compound word is or should be written: combined, hyphenated or separated. How do we write 'nonnative' and 'gentlemen' for example? Should they be written as they have been written above or in the other two forms: 'non-native' or 'non native' and 'gentle-men' or 'gentle men'? Quirk et al (1985) write 'nonnative', either as an adjective or noun (p. 3). Many educated Nigerians use 'non-native' or 'non native.' Tomori (1977) also questions this phenomenon and reveals that in 'a recorded speech of a native speaker, the difference between the articulation of *gentle man* written separately and *gentleman* blocked was known to be absent' (p. 17). These are examined under 'compound-word-spelling intraference.' All the examples in this paper are elicited from the educated variety of Nigerian English.

ESL and ENL are often contrasted with English as a native language or mother tongue (ENL, EMT). EFL denotes foreigners' English variety, which is used for restricted purposes like international diplomacy, trade and travelling in countries that have their national and/or official language, or a second language other than English. The people who use English in EFL settings are very few indeed compared with ENL and ESL settings; e.g. English for the Chinese, Japanese and Italians. EMT is used to denote native speakers' variety, e.g. British

English, American English and Australian English, which ESL and EFL countries see as the exonormic models. ESL refers to the variety spoken outside native English settings or perhaps in native English settings by nonnative immigrants who have their own native language or mother tongue but acquired English formally and informally in ESL settings as a lingua-franca, the language of formal education and scholarship, official broadcast, government, intranational and international commerce, diplomacy, sports, among others. Nigerian English is the leading ESL model at present worldwide.

The varieties of English used in Nigeria are usually assessed against the features of SBE or SAE. Region, formal education and (psycho)sociolinguistic parameters are used to classify Nigerian English varieties (Jowitt, 2008; Surakat, 2010). There exist many regions and different regional varieties of Nigerian English (abbreviated NE or NigE): *Hausa*, *Yoruba*, *Igbo*, *Efik*, *Urhobo*, *Izon*, *Egbira*, etc. Each regional variety has its linguistic variations and similarities to the others. Phonological variations in the main distinguish regional varieties.

Several classifications have been made with formal education and linguistic features, the most prominent being Banjo's (1970, 1996) varieties I, II, III and IV. *Variety I* is the lowest, which reflects vulgar errors of grammar and broken structures often used by primary school pupils and those with half-baked formal education. *Variety II*, which is an improvement on *Variety I*, is used by secondary school students, school certificate holders and a majority of Nigerians. *Variety III* is spoken by highly educated people, graduates, teachers, lecturers, professors, writers, broadcasters, etc. Banjo proposes this model for Nigerian English. His *Variety III* is often referred to as Standard Nigerian English (SNE) or Educated Nigerian English (ENE). Lastly, *Variety IV* of Banjo is like native English standard spoken by few Nigerians who were born in native English-speaking countries or have a parent of English origin and consequently acquired English as their first language (Banjo 1996). But this variety is considered too foreign and affected.

Three 'lects': *basilect*, *mesolect* and *acrolectare* often depicted at the sociolinguistic level (Ogbulogo, 2005). The *Mesolect* is the lowest variety analogous to Banjo's *Variety I*. The *Basilect* is the most popular and widely used in Nigeria by junior civil servants, secondary school students and not-so-educated youths. The *Acrolect* is used by few very highly educated Nigerians. It has the greatest prestige and international intelligibility. Banjo's *Variety III*, which is also the *acrolect* on the sociolinguistic pyramid, is the variety being paraded as Nigerian standard. Nevertheless, these classifications are not clear-cut,

for there are overlaps. ‘There can, in truth, never be any firm dividing lines’ (Banjo, 1996, p.79). Spelling deviations are widespread in all in all the varieties. However, we concentrate on the cases in ENE.

Saussure (1966) decries the English writing system as a “huge edifice of confusion,” replete with “inconsistencies,” “aberrations,” and “absurdities that cannot be excused” (Saussure, pp. 22, 31). Firth (1937) also says that “English spelling is so preposterously unsystematic that some sort of reform is undoubtedly necessary in the interest of the whole world” (p. 48). Jowitt (2008), Bezrukova (2011), Yule (1978, 1991), Upward (1995) and Onose (2003) have also reemphasised unsystematic nature of English spelling. Many studies for over a century now have shown that reformed spelling would enable children and learners to read more easily than in traditional orthography (Yule, 1991; Ekundayo, 2014; Seymour, 2001). In ENE, orthographic intraference cases, which are occasioned by psycho-sociolinguistic factors, manifest in derived/ transferred spelling, homophonous mix ups, acronyms with blends and in the spelling of compound words.

## Methodology

### Research Design

The paper, on the one hand, applied the qualitative method, which is mainly non-statistical, and often adopted for linguistic studies to examine causal processes and purposeful responses by informed and self-directing participants. This method is used to describe, explain and discuss the linguistic texts in the paper. On the other hand, the quantitative method, which is statistical, was also adopted because of the sociolinguistic nature of the paper. This method facilitated the presentation of ordinal data in simple percentile, frequency tables and charts. It was assumed that the orthographic dynamics and features of the language influence educated Nigerians to spell words in certain ways, produce acronyms and mix up the three ways in which compound words are spelt. The paper adopted the concept of intraference to (1) show how base form spelling influences derived spelling, (2) present homophones and homonyms that intrafere with one another, (3) demonstrate how the three spelling rules for compound words intrafere with one another and (4) propose how these features should be treated in teaching and learning English in ESL settings.



### Context and Participants

The study was carried out in Nigeria, the largest ESL country at present. Educated Nigerians were surveyed from 2005 to May 2013. Nigerians in the continuum of National Diploma (ND) minimum to Ph.D./Professor are considered educated. Subjects were between 19 and 70 years, comprising lecturers and final year students in English and Literature, Linguistics, and International Studies and Diplomacy, Mass Communication, Theatre Arts Departments and other departments in ten government-owned universities and other schools tested in five of the six geo-political zones of Nigeria: the South-West, the multi-lingual South-South, the North Central, the South-East and the multilingual Middle-Belt. The universities and institutions are Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, Bayero University, Kano (North); University of Lagos, Lagos, Federal University of Technology, Akure (West); University of Nigeria, Enugu Campus, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka (East); University of Ilorin, Ilorin, University of Abuja, Federal Capital Territory (Middle-Belt); University of Benin, Benin City, Edo State, and the University of Port Harcourt, Port Harcourt (South-South); four federal government owned polytechnics: Federal Polytechnic, Auchi (South-South), Federal Polytechnic, Ede (West), Federal Polytechnic Offa (Middle-Belt), Kaduna Polytechnic, Kaduna (North) and Federal Polytechnic, Oke. For the examples of the derived and transferred spelling forms', thirty thousand sheets of a questionnaire were distributed and twenty thousand collated and analysed between 2005 and 2013.

For compound words, 25,000 educated Nigerians were tested with questionnaire. However, 10,000 copies were analysed for this paper. In all, 30,000 of the responses were collated and analysed. Few other examples were extracted from secondary sources and speeches. The percentage of users for each case tested is simply indicated in front of each example. Below 30% is tagged 'isolated.' 30-39% is tagged 'emerging trend,' which means that the variant is not popular in ENE, 40-49 is a 'variant' or 'free variant,' 50-59 is 'common,' 60-79% is tagged 'widespread' and 80-100% is tagged 'entrenched' or 'institutionalised'.

### Data Collection Instruments

The primary data were from the two questionnaires collated and analysed from 2005 to 2013. A few cases were extracted from spontaneous speeches and secondary sources such as books, newspapers, scholarly articles and other printed matters.

## Data Analysis and Interpretation

Derived and transferred spelling. Derived spelling intraference comes into derivatives from the base or root word. Examples are in the table below:

*Table 1.* Derived and transferred spelling

S/N	ENE Variant	Percentage over 20,000	Similar Sources of Intraference in the Language	SBE Variants	Percentage over 20,000	Degree of Spread
1	cementery cemenry cemenary cemetary	10,000/50% 1,500/7.5% 6,000/30% 5,500/27.5%	cement, country, commentary, documentary, etc	cemetery	3,000/	common isolated emerging
2	enterpreneur enterpreniur	9,000/45% 2,000/10%	enterprise, enter, etc.	entrepreneur	9,000/45%	Variant Isolated
3	grievous	15,000/75%	The transfer of -iousin words like precious, obvious.	grievous	5,000/25%	widespread
4	mischievious	15,000/75%	Same as above	mischievous	5,000/25%	widespread
5	pronunciation	12,000/60%	as in announce/ announcement, pronounce/ment	pronunciation	8,000/40%	widespread
6	interprete	17,000/85%	Influenced by similar words like <i>complete</i> , <i>deplete</i> , <i>replete</i> , <i>effete</i> , etc	interpret	3,000/15%	entrenched
7	shinning	17,000/85%	The rule of doubling a consonant before adding a suffix, as in <i>beginning</i> , <i>banning</i> , <i>fanning</i> .	shining	3,000/15%	entrenched
8	dinning hall	17,000/85%	As above	Dining hall	3,000/15%	entrenched
9	priviledge	15,000/75%	influenced by words like <i>edge</i> , <i>knowledge</i> , <i>porridge</i> , <i>pledge</i> , etc.	privilege	5,000/15%	entrenched

10	bosom	12,000/60%	the transfer of the spelling of <i>loss, blossom, crossed, possess, etc.</i>	bosom	8,000/40%	widespread
11	superintendent	13,000/65%	Intraference of the noun suffix <i>-ant</i> , as in <i>attendant, participant, etc. (superintend+ant)</i>	superintendent	7,000/35%	entrenched
12	forment trouble	18,000/90%	Influence of <i>torment</i> .	foment	2,000/10%	entrenched
13	expantiate	18,000/90%	Expand transferred to <i>expantiate</i> .			entrenched
14	definate(ly)	12,000/60%	Intraference of the suffix <i>-ate</i> in words like <i>decimate, defecate, inundate, etc.</i>			entrenched
15	indestructable	11,000/55%	Intraference of the suffix <i>-able</i> , as in <i>formidable, durable, etc.</i>	Indestructible	9,000/45%	Entrenched
	miscellaneous	15,000/75%	The redeployment of the adjectival suffix <i>-ous</i> , as in <i>proteinous, intravenous, etc.</i>	Miscellaneous	5,000/25%	Widespread
	anointed	16,000/80%	Doubling of consonants as in <i>annotated, annoy, announce, etc.</i>	anointed	4,000/20%	entrenched

Table 2: Summary of the degree of spread of the items in Table 1

Types	Entrenched	Widespread	Common	Variant	Emerging	Isolated	Total
Number	10	5	1	1	1	2	20

**Homophonous/homonymous intraference.** Below are some typical examples from written works and spontaneous speeches. Although they were not tested in a questionnaire, the researcher used his knowledge and experience as an educated Nigerian and a teacher of English for over twenty years to tag them accordingly as entrenched, widespread, common, etc.

21. **‘Love portion’** instead of SBE ‘love potion (entrenched)  
 “He gave her love portion to eat and since then she does anything he says.”
22. **Pottage/porridge** (entrenched)  
 “In a corner of the market, women were sweating over sizzling pots of fried yam, yam pottage, rice and beans” (Okediran, 2009, p. 170).  
 SBE is porridge. Pottage has a different meaning not related to cooked food.
23. **Their/there** (common)  
 “The road was very clear and their were signs of rain...” (UNIBEN Exam E/R: 07555: 2)
24. **Sight/cited/site** (common)  
 “We had not gotten to Delta State when I sited a car at our back (UNIBEN Exam E/R: 00562 :2).
25. **Teaming/teeming** (entrenched)  
 “There is no food for the teaming population” (Ekundayo, 2005, p.37).
26. **Lacking /lagging** (entrenched)  
 “You are lacking behind” (Ekundayo, 2009, p.138). SBE is ...lagging behind
27. **Wigs/wicks** (entrenched)  
 “Have you fixed wigs in the stove?” (wicks), entrenched.
28. **Cannon/cannon** (widespread)  
 “They shot canons during their father’s burial” (cannons), entrenched.
29. **Tangle/tango** (widespread)  
 “It takes two to tangle” (tango), entrenched.

30. **Seeming/seamy** (widespread)  
“Destitute are on the seeming side of life” (seamy), entrenched.
31. **Past/pass** (widespread)  
“She just walked pass me” (past), entrenched.
32. **Stationery/stationary** (common)  
“The vehicle is stationery” (stationary), entrenched.
33. **Career/carrier** (widespread)  
“These are carrier women who don’t want to settle down” (career).

### Regular word spelling intraference in acronyms

34. **OBJ/obj** (entrenched)  
Obj, for Olusegun Obasanjo, a three-time Nigerian Head- of- State and President (1976-1979, as military Head of State, and 1999-2007, as Civilian President).
35. **Uniben/uniben** (instead of UNIBEN, or UniBen, entrenched)  
“I was very glad and anticipated the day I would step into the gates of great Uniben” (Uniben Exam Booklet, E/R: 03708:3).
36. **Delsu** (rather than DELSU, or DeLSU), entrenched.
37. **Unilag** (rather than UniLag or UNILAG), entrenched.  
University of Lagos.
38. **Nifor** (NIFOR), entrenched.  
Nigeria Institute for Oil-Palm Research.
39. **Nipost** (NIPOST), entrenched.  
A clip and blend for ‘Nigerian Postal Services.’
40. **Jambite/jambite** (entrenched)

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This is written as if it were not an acronym (JAMB: Joint Admission and Matriculation Board, which conducts entrance examination to Nigerian universities) combined with the suffix -ite. The fabrication has simply been raised to the status of an established word and written as such. This also occurs in SBE; for example, Internet, Laser, (Quirk et al, 1985, p.1582). A jambite is a fresh, new student on campus, a novice or starter.

**Compound-word intraference.** All the respondents/responses collated and analysed (10,000 in all) admitted misspelling some words and mixing up the three ways in which compound words are spelt. Furthermore, the twenty two compound words dictated for them to spell were spelt indiscriminately in any of the three ways. Table 3 shows how the twenty-two compound words dictated were spelt. (A) is SBE variant.

*Table 3. Cases of compound word spelling intraference*

S/N	Compound	Percentage	Degree of Spread	Comment
1	A. at least B. atleast C. at-least	2,000/20% 7,000/70% 1,000/10%	entrenched	In these examples, the non- SBE forms are more popular, the combined form <i>atleast</i> being the most popular.
2	A. day break B. daybreak C. day-break	1,500/15% 6,000/60% 2,500/10%	widespread	Again, the non-SBE form are more common, the combined form having 60%.
3	A. day dream B. daydream C. day-dream	2,000/20% 6,500/65% 1,500/15%	widespread	The blocked form leads here.
4	A. dry cleaner B. drycleaner C. dry-cleaner	2,000/20% 3,000/30% 5,000/50%	common	Here, the hyphenated and blocked forms lead, the hyphenated form having 50%.
5	A. every day B. everyday C. every-day	2,000/20% 7,000/70% 1,000/10%	widespread	The blocked form is the most popular here for both noun and adjective. SBE uses the blocked form as an adjective and the open form as a noun: ‘ <i>An everyday problem happens every day</i> ’
6	A. Fish pond B. Fishpond C. Fish-pond	3,000/30% 5,000/60% 2,000/10%	widespread	The blocked form is the most popular followed by the SBE form.
7	A. Frying pan B. Fryingpan C. Frying-pan	2,500/25% 3,500/35% 4,000/40%	Variant	The hyphenated form leads here with the blocked form next. The three are popular.
8	A. Gas cooker B. Gascooker C. Gas-cooker	5,000/50% 1,000/10% 4,000/40%	common	SBE and the hyphenated forms are more popular for this word.

9	A. Girl friend B. Girlfriend C. Girl-friend	3,500/35% 5,000/50% 2,000/20%	common	The blocked form is ahead in this example.
10	A. Goal keeper B. Goalkeeper C. Goal-keeper	2,000/20% 4,500/45% 3,500/35%	variant	Preference is for the combined and hyphenated forms.
11	A. Hand shake B. Handshake C. Hand-shake	1,500/15% 5,000/50% 3,500/35%	common	As in 10 above.
12	A. In fact B. Infact C. In-fact	500/5% 9,000/70% 500/5%	widespread	The blocked type is entrenched in ENE.
13	A. Lap top B. Laptop C. Lap-top	2,000/20% 5,000/50% 3,000/30%	common	The popular types are the combined and hyphenated forms.
14	A. Navy blue B. Navyblue C. Navy-blue	2,000/20% 4,000/40% 4,000/40%	variant	The combined and hyphenated types are the more popular variants.
15	A. Schoolboy B. School boy C. School-boy	6,000/60% 1,000/10% 3,000/30%	widespread	The SBE form, which is blocked, is most popular. The hyphenated form is also common.
16	A. Smallpox B. Small pox C. Small-pox	4,000/40% 3,000/30% 4,000/40%	Variant	The SBE form and the hyphenated form are variants here.
17	A. Steam engine B. Steamengine C. Steam-engine	2,000/20% 2,000/70% 6,000/10%	widespread	Preference is for the hyphenated form.
18	A. Sugar cane B. Sugarcane C. Sugar-cane	2,000/20% 5,000/50% 3,000/30%	common	The combined form is most popular.
19	A. Wedding ring B. Weddingring C. Wedding-ring	2,000/20% 3,000/30% 5,000/50%	common	The hyphenated form leads in this word.
20	A. Yellow fever B. Yellowfever C. Yellow-fever	2,000/20% 3,500/35% 4,500/45%	Variant	The blocked and hyphenated forms are the popular variants.
21	A. Youth club B. Youthclub C. Youth-club	3,000/30% 4,000/40% 3,000/30%	Variant	As in 18
22	A. Zebra crossing B. Zebracrossing C. Zebra-crossing	3,500/35% 2,000/70% 4,500/45%	widespread	The SBE form and the hyphenated are more popular for this word.

*Table 4.* Frequency table for compound-word-spelling intraference

S/N	Type	Frequency	Percentage
1	Entrenched	1	4.5%
2	Widespread	8	36.3%
3	Common	7	32%
4	Variant	6	27%
5	Emerging	0	0%
6	Total	22	100%

As shown above, compound spelling intraference is widespread and common in ENE. Table 3 shows that the three forms compete with one another, with higher preference for the combined and hyphenated forms. Asked to state how best compound words should be written to avoid confusion, the respondents suggested one-way rule only. Five thousand and eight hundred (5,800/58%) suggested the hyphenated type while four thousand and two hundred (4,200/42%) proposed the combined form. Indeed, it makes no difference to meaning and it scarcely affects pronunciation if a compound word is written in any of the three forms. Quirk et al(1985) also acknowledge the inconsistencies that characterise writing compound words. At times, a compound word is acceptably written in the three ways possible; for example, “a flower pot, a flower-pot, a flowerpot.” Furthermore, they observe that hyphenation is more common in BrE than in AmE, where compound words tend to be written more in combined form (p.1569).

*Table 5.* Summary table for all the cases examined

Types	Entrenched	Widespread	Common	Variant	Emerging	Isolated	Total
Number	23	18	11	7	1	2	62
Percentage	37%	29%	18%	11.2%	1.6%	3.2%	100%



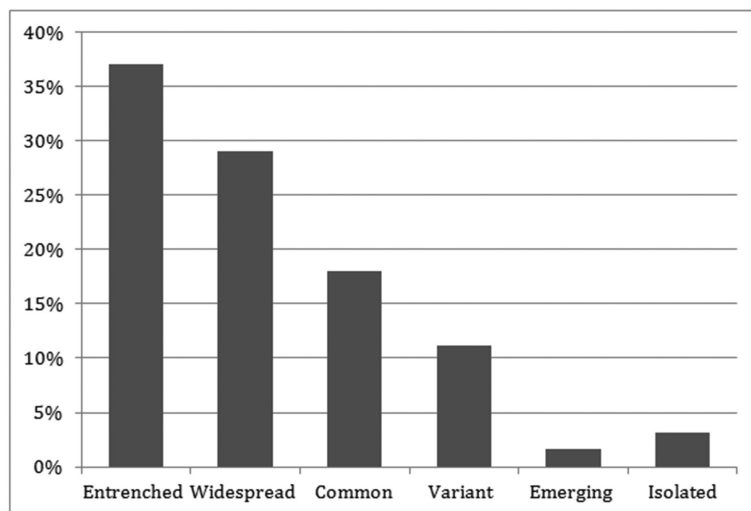


Figure 1. Summary bar graph for all the cases examined

### Conclusions

The paper examined spelling variants in ENE from the perspectives of derived and transferred spelling, homophones, homonyms, acronymisation and compound words. Cases of transferred and derived spelling are often treated as writing errors even though some of them have fossilised so much that they characterise the written variety of Nigerian English. Examiners who can identify them as different from standard dictionary or SBE spelling treat them as errors and penalise writers for them, particularly in standardised examinations like General Certificate of Education (GCE), West African School Certificate Examination (WASCE), National Examination Council (NECO), etc; and in language-based departments of higher institutions of learning.

Since ENE does not condone spelling mistakes and as NigE is still being standardised (*A Dictionary of Nigerian English* just got released in September, 2014), individual words that are misspelt for one linguistic or psycho-sociolinguistic reason or another, and homophonous/homonymous mix ups should be treated as deviations or errors because homophonous and homonymous mix ups create confusion and distort meaning. So, they are not tenable as features of ENE. Teachers of composition in ESL ought to identify and teach learners how to avoid or spot them during proofreading. However, acronyms and regular

word-spelling intraference may be brooked because they are justifiable. They do not impede meaning and they are proudly Nigerian. Those that have become institutionalised as regular words should be allowed to be, e.g. ‘Jambite’ or ‘jambite’ never written as ‘JAMBITE’ or ‘JAMBite’ in ENE.

As regard compound-words, it has been shown that the spelling of compound words lacks consistency and uniformity in the two most popular English models of the world. Therefore, the suggestion of our respondents presented below should be adopted. Either A or B (as shown below) can be adopted for writing all compound words in all contexts, instead of the three ways in which they can occur, which confuse even the most conscious of writers:

A		B
Brotherinlaw	or	brother-in-law
Commanderinchief	or	commander-in-chief
Cassavaflower	or	cassava-flower
Stonehearted	or	stone-hearted
Sergeantatarm	or	sergeant-at-arm
Headofstate	or	head-of-state

The researcher’s preference is for B because the blocked form often gives the impression that it is a single entity when indeed it has two base forms, and the separated form also gives the impression that they are two words in a basic or simple noun phrase. Writing the hyphenated form only will be clearer and easier to teach, internalise and write. Alternatively, writers should be at liberty to use any of the three forms to write any compound word whatsoever, as in the example of ‘flowerpot,’ ‘flower-pot’ or ‘flower pot.’ The teaching (and teachers) of ESL should identify the areas of orthographic confusion examined here, teach, demonstrate them and make learners write exercise regularly on them to internalise their dynamics and correct features until such a time that the English spelling system is reformed to eliminate irregularities, as Ekundayo (2014) has proposed and demonstrated.

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